
1997 Data Tables
National Transit Database

Chapter 1

Introduction—Understanding and Using this Report

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Introduction—Understanding and Using this Report

The Data Tables for the 1997 National Transit Database Report Year is one of three publications comprising the 1997 Annual Report. Also referred to as the National Transit Database Reporting System, this program is administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The report provides detailed summaries of financial and operating data submitted to FTA by the nation's mass transit agencies. This report was produced under a professional services support contract with the guidance of FTA's Office of Program Guidance and Support.

The National Transit Database tracks reporters in several ways. One way is to record the actual number of individual reporters in each report year. For the 1997 Report Year, the number of individual reporters is 556. Of this number, 66 transit agencies received exemptions from detailed reporting (Nine or Fewer Vehicle Exemptions) and 14 were deleted due to incomplete data. Thus, 476 individual reporters are included in the full database. Agencies granted exemptions are included only in Appendix B—Transit Agencies Receiving Nine or Fewer Vehicle Exemptions; agencies deleted are included only in Appendix C—Transit Agencies Deleted from 1997 Annual Publications. Appendix D lists agencies which had a mode/type of service deleted. Of the transit agencies reporting, 58.5 percent contract for some or all of their transportation from private or public agencies.

The other two publications comprising the 1997 National Transit Database Annual Report are: *National Transit Summaries and Trends* and *Transit Profiles*. The *Transit Profiles* are contained in two volumes: Agencies in Urbanized Areas (UZAs) Exceeding 200,000 Population; and Agencies in Urbanized Areas with a Population of Less Than 200,000.

Descriptions and definitions of terminology used in the 1997 National Transit Database Annual Report publications may be found in the 1997 National Transit Database Reporting Manual.

Pursuant to 49 USC 5335 (formerly Section 15 of the Federal Transit Act, as amended), the establishment of a uniform system of accounts and records plus a reporting system for the collection and dissemination of public mass transportation financial and operating data by uniform categories is required. All applicants and direct beneficiaries of Federal assistance under 49 USC 5307 (formerly Section 9 of the Federal Transit Act, as amended) are subject to the reporting system and the uniform system of accounts and records. The purpose of the National Transit Database Reporting System is to assist in meeting the need for information on which to base planning for public transportation services and to make public sector investment decisions at all levels of government.

This 1997 Annual Report contains data for individual transit agencies' fiscal year ending during Calendar Year 1997 (i.e., on or between January 1 and December 31, 1997). This is the nineteenth Annual Report published.

Chapter 2 contains an introduction designed to aid in interpreting and using the data presented. The chapter introduction also presents important updates from previous editions of the Annual Report.

For the 1997 edition, the following changes were implemented:

- Safety and Security include purchased transportation service. In previous years, data was available for directly operated service only.
- Operating Expenses for purchased transportation are detailed by function (vehicle operations, vehicle maintenance, non-vehicle maintenance, and general administration). In previous years, only the total expenses were known and collapsed under column "purchased transportation in report" (Table 10). For the 1997 edition, the organization and presentation of the data are as follows:
- The organization within the tables is sorted by State and within each State alphabetically by agency name.

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- The summary totals include totals by UZA and fleet size groupings, and in modal tables a summary by mode is also presented.
- Appendix A provides a cross-reference to the fleet size groupings used in previous editions.
- Appendix B provides a list of agencies that received exemptions from reporting.
- Appendix C provides a list of agencies deleted due to incomplete data.
- Appendix D provides modes/type of service deleted due to data problems.

1.1 How this Report is Organized

The report consists of two chapters.

Chapter 1 Introduction: Provides general information related to understanding and using this 1997 Annual Report and earlier reports.

Chapter 2 Data Tables: Contain financial and operating data by specific mode for individual transit agencies.

1.2 How the Data Tables are Organized

The Data Tables in Chapter 2 are organized in four major groups:

- transit revenues
- transit expenses
- non-financial operating data
- performance indicators

The first three groups of tables (transit revenues, expenses, and non-financial operating data) contain summaries of the data required by the reporting system. The fourth group of tables displays performance indicators composed of selected statistics derived from data in the first three groups. Typically, these indicators are computed as ratios, relating measures of input to measures of output (e.g., operating expenses per vehicle revenue hour), or measures of output to measures of service consumption (e.g. un-

linked passenger trips per vehicle revenue hour). Within each table, the data are organized by State and within each State alphabetically by agency name. The identification number is followed by the agency's type of organization. The inclusion of the organizational type codes provides a better way of describing transit providers.

The organization codes used are:

- A Public agency or authority that directly operates all transit service [not a State Department of Transportation (DOT)]
- B Public agency or authority that contracts for some or all transit service (not a State DOT)
- C State Department of Transportation
- D Private carrier under contract to one or more public agencies
- E Private carrier not under contract to a public agency and not receiving Urbanized Area Formula Apportionment funds
- F Other

The numbering system for the Data Tables has been consistent from 1992 to 1994. In 1995, with the expansion of safety and inclusion of security, new tables were created to accommodate the enhanced data.

1.3 Special Notes on Reporting and this Annual Report

Several general issues pertaining to the reporting system and this Annual Report are summarized below. These discussions are designed to aid in interpreting and using the data published in this report.

Alphabetical and State Organization

The organization for the 1997 edition includes transit agencies organized by State and alphabetically by agency name within each State. This organization enables easier location of specific transit agencies for data analysis.

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Calendar Year

The report year was changed beginning in 1983 to a calendar year period.

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Database Adjustment

Summaries of financial and operating data contained in this report are based on the most recent submissions by transit agencies as of the publication date. However, audits or other reviews made at later dates may result in changes which more accurately reflect actual statistics. While a future addendum will not be published to the 1997 Annual Report, it should be noted that some changes may be made after publication of the 1997 Annual Report. Those changes will be reflected in the database which FTA maintains.

Modes and Vehicle Type Codes

The following mnemonic codes represented by two alphabet letters are used to describe modes and vehicle types in the tables:

Mode Codes

AG	Automated Guideway
CC	Cable Car
CR	Commuter Rail
DR	Demand Response
FB	Ferryboat
HR	Heavy Rail (formerly Rapid Rail)
IP	Inclined Plane
JT	Jitney
LR	Light Rail (formerly Streetcar)
MB	Bus
MO	Monorail
PB	Publico
TB	Trolleybus
TR	Aerial Tramway
VP	Vanpool
OR	Other

Note: Monorail was designated as OR in both the 1991 and 1992 editions.

Vehicle Type Codes

AB	Articulated motor buses
AG	Automated guideway vehicles
AO	Automobiles
BA	Buses, Class A (>35 seats)
BB	Buses, Class B (25-35 seats)
BC	Buses, Class C (<25 seats)
CC	Cable cars

DB	Double decked buses
FB	Ferryboats
HR	Heavy rail passenger cars
IP	Inclined plane vehicles
LR	Light rail vehicles (Streetcars)
MO	Monorail vehicles
RL	Commuter rail locomotives
RP	Commuter rail passenger coaches
RS	Commuter rail, self-propelled passenger cars
SB	School buses
TB	Trolleybuses
TR	Aerial tramways
VN	Vans
OR	Other

Note: Due to limited space in Tables 10 and 26, the small letter “p” following the mode code indicates that the mode is provided under a purchase of service agreement.

Multi-Area Reports

Some transit agencies, particularly commuter rail agencies, provide data for transportation services serving more than one urbanized area (UZA). For reporting purposes, a transit agency serving more than one UZA and filing a single report has been assigned to the UZA that received the majority of transportation service.

Purchased Transportation

Many transit agencies contract for transportation services. These contracted services may be provided by public agencies and/or private carriers. Contracted transportation services or purchased transportation are split in two categories: (1) expenses for contract carriers where data are included in the purchasing agency's report (object class 508.01); and, (2) expenses for those contract carriers that file their own report (object class 508.02). Contract carriers using 100 or more vehicles to provide annual maximum service are required to file a separate report. For the 1997 Report Year, 22 reports were received from private providers operating in excess of 100 vehicles.

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This edition of the 1997 Data Tables includes three tables (Tables 10, 11, and 12) where purchased and directly operated expenses are identified. Note that contract carriers using 100 or more revenue vehicles in maximum service are listed as directly operated services since a separate report is submitted for these services. This reporting results in operating data being reported twice: first, for these purchased transportation services as an expense for the transit agency contracting with the provider(s)—these expenses are reported under object class 508.02; second, for the individual contract operator which provides purchased transportation services under the contractual relationship.

To identify contract service providers, mode specific operating data are identified as being part of a purchased service arrangement by a small letter “p” added to the mode code. Tables 10 and 26 is the only table with the small letter “p”. Unless specified by the small letter “p” or in the table headers, data are for directly operated public transportation providers and contract operations that file a separate report. For the 1997 Report Year, there were 113 transit agencies that acquired 100 percent of their service from purchased transportation providers, and 15 filed as directly operated with more than 100 vehicles.

Beginning with the 1984 Report Year, reporters were allowed to allocate their expenses in any object class, including purchased transportation expenses, to any functional category. This enabled reporters to distribute purchased transportation expenses by the functions of vehicle operations, vehicle maintenance, non-vehicle maintenance, and general administration. Previously, reporters were required to submit all purchased transportation expenses under general administration.

From the 1991 to 1995 Report Year, expenses allocated to object classes 508.01 and 508.02 for purchased transportation were reported under either the Vehicle Operations function (010) or the General Administration function (160).

FTA introduced a reporting change in 1995 requiring all agencies contracting for transportation services to fully detail their purchased transportation

costs by mode, function, and object class. The reporting change also required reporting the full cost of the purchased transportation services, including all costs whose funding sources were not included in the contracts.

Most agencies experienced problems complying with the new requirements and FTA allowed all agencies to report purchased transportation expenses under object class 508.01 as in previous years. However the requirement of reporting these expenses by function was maintained in 1997. Table 10 includes for the first time purchased transportation expenses detailed by function.

508.02 expenses were not detailed by function and are presented under column “Purchased transportation filing a separate report” (Tables 10, 11, and 12).

Another reporting change in 1997 was the inclusion of safety and security data for purchased transportation. Therefore, Tables 20 through 25 show data for both directly operated and purchased transportation services.

Deleted and Questionable Data Items

For data whose validity and reliability are questionable, the value of the data is included in the tables followed by a “Q” for questionable data. The data affected are those where the transit agency failed to respond satisfactorily to questions raised during the validation process and/or did not collect the data in accordance with FTA’s definitions and requirements. In addition, data items waived are followed by a “W” and data items deleted are followed by a “D”.

A data item(s) that was not entered in the National Transit Database, was partially deleted, or was considered questionable by FTA when one or more of the following circumstances existed.

1. The transit agency did not acknowledge that required declarations were on file.
2. Title 49 USC 5307 (formerly Section 9 of the Federal Transit Act, as amended) data declaration by the independent auditor stated that

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the data were not collected in accordance with FTA's definitions and requirements.

3. Issue(s) associated with the reporter's documentation and/or declaration(s) were not fully resolved.
4. Required data were omitted.
5. The transit agency did not provide the complete cost of services for either directly operated and/or purchased transportation.
6. The transit agency reported the same data for 1996 and 1997.
7. The transit agency did not provide sufficient information prior to the closure of the database to validate reported data.
8. The reported data were considered questionable following validation and analysis.
9. Required documentation for Non-Rail Fixed Guideway Directional Route Miles was not provided.
10. A reporting waiver was requested and granted by FTA.

Transit Agency Names and Identification Codes

Due to space limitations, transit agency names are abbreviated using 25 characters or less. The UZA served is included in cases where it is not an integral part of the transit agency name. Also, transit agency acronyms are used to conserve space.

A four-digit identification number is assigned to each transit agency. The first digit of this number corresponds with the FTA Region in which the transit agency is located (FTA Regions 1-10). (Note: identification numbers beginning with a zero indicate FTA Region 10.)

Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service

Vehicles operated in maximum service data are reported by mode and type of service on the Transit System Service Form (406). Maximum service is the revenue vehicle count taken during a reporting transit agency's maximum season of the year, on the week and day that this maximum occurs. It is not

taken on a day when a special event or an extreme set of circumstances would cause the resulting tally to represent a one-time event rather than a recurring maximum service requirement. This fleet size measure provides a more meaningful measure of a transit agency's operating characteristics because it does not include spare and stored vehicles.

Vehicles for Directly Operated and Purchased Transportation Services and Vehicles for a Specific Mode

Vehicles operated in maximum service for both directly operated and purchased transportation services data were used to create fleet size categories in prior Annual Reports. However, in directly operated service only tables, the specific vehicle counts provided are only for those directly operated by the transit agency, as reported on the Transit System Service Form (406) for directly operated services. Therefore, a transit agency may be grouped in a larger fleet size category than the number of vehicles shown in a specific table. For example, a transit agency that both directly operates 450 non-rail vehicles and purchases services involving 75 non-rail vehicles for a total of 525 vehicles, as reported on separate Transit System Service Form(s) (406) for directly operated and for purchased transportation services, is grouped in the 500-999 vehicles operated in maximum service category. However, this transit agency would show only 450 vehicles in the vehicles operated in maximum service column in a directly operated services only table since only 450 vehicles are directly operated. Footnotes have been added in Chapter 2 to indicate when the vehicles operated in maximum service data are taken only from directly operated services.

Multi-modal transit agencies are included in categories for the number of vehicles operated in maximum service for the combined fleet size for all modes.

Vehicles Available for Maximum Service

Table 3.16 of the 1985 through 1989 Annual Reports includes a column for vehicles available for maximum service. Beginning with the 1990 Annual Report, these data are found in Table 26. These data are reported on the Transit System Service Form (406).

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They include spares, out of service vehicles, and vehicles in or awaiting maintenance. They do not include vehicles held for sale, emergency contingency use, etc. If the total active fleet for a given mode varies during the year, the reported figure represents the same time period as that used to report vehicles operated in maximum service. Thus, the difference between vehicles available for maximum service can be used to compute a transit agency's spare ratio. The vehicles available for maximum service data in Table 26 replace the trains operated in average weekday maximum service data in previous reports (i.e., 1984 and earlier reports).

The 1997 Data Tables continue to include Total Active Fleet data from the Revenue Vehicle Inventory Form (408), in Table 27 as was done in the 1984 and subsequent editions. Unlike the vehicles available for maximum service data described above, the total active fleet data in Table 27 represent only those vehicles owned by the reporting transit agency at the end of their fiscal year and are reported by vehicle type, not mode.

1.4 Completeness and Accuracy of the Data

The data submitted to FTA by transit agencies are subjected to extensive analysis and validation, both manual and automated. The process entails detailed examination of each transit agency's report, identification of errors or questionable entries, and direct resolution of these problems in conjunction with the reporting transit agency.

FTA's role in this process is to identify and resolve questions of data completeness and accuracy and give

final approval to an agency's data as a prerequisite to entry into the National Transit Database and Annual Report. FTA can reject a transit agency's report if the report is not in full compliance with reporting requirements. Alternatively, FTA may refuse to enter data items whose reliability is questionable.

FTA does not change any reported data. All data changes must be made by the reporting transit agency.

In general, the quality of the database improves each year as FTA simplifies and clarifies definitions of data items and reporting procedures, enhances diskette reporting, places more emphasis on reporter interaction, and designs more sophisticated validation checks. Despite these extensive efforts, data validation encompasses primarily a review of the consistency and reasonableness of the reported data. Because of the limitations of these procedures, as well as the amount of data validated, it is likely that some erroneous data have found their way into this report. Generally, errors of significant magnitude have been detected and corrected, but some minor errors remain. These errors generally derive from difficulties experienced by transit agencies in obtaining accurate information and from misinterpretation of certain data definitions.

Caution: Because of these limitations and the fact that not all relevant information is reported (weather conditions, topography, contractual work rules, etc.), users of this report should not draw unwarranted conclusions

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from the examination of the data. Although comparative evaluations are appealing, analyses of the reported data are inadequate in accounting completely for apparent differences in performance. Such evaluations should encompass a more detailed examination of underlying factors to determine the extent to which apparent differences are due to unique aspects of the transit agency's operating environment, specific management practices, or unusual events during the period covered.

The User's Guide is available through the McTrans Center [telephone (904) 392-0378].

1.5 Further Information on the Reporting System

The following FTA documents provide a detailed description of the reporting system:

- *National Transit Database, Uniform System of Accounts (USOA)*, January 1995.

This manual and the glossary contain the definitions used for the uniform system of accounts and records.

- *1997 Reporting Manual*.

This manual provides all of the reporting instructions and sample forms used by transit agencies filing 1997 reports.

- *FTA Circular 2710.1A, Sampling Procedures for Obtaining Fixed Route Bus Operating Data Required Under the Section 15 Reporting System*, July 18, 1988.

- *FTA Circular 2710.2A, Sampling Procedures for Obtaining Demand Responsive Bus Operating Data Required Under the Section 15 Reporting System*, July 22, 1988.

These two circulars suggest optional sampling procedures for collecting unlinked passenger trip and passenger mile data required for reports. Complete instructions and worksheets are provided for those transit agencies wishing to use these procedures.

- *Data User's Guide to the FTA Section 15 Reporting System*, Transportation Systems Center, June 1, 1989.

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Other documents are available upon request to:

Federal Transit Administration
National Transit Database
P.O. Box 1406
Springfield, VA 22151-0406
(703) 205-2475

1.6 Industry—Government Cooperation

The Reporting System evolved from the transit industry-initiated Project **FARE** (Uniform **F**inancial **A**ccounting and **R**eporting **E**lements). Over the years, a cooperative working arrangement has developed between the transit industry and the Federal government on data collection and the reporting system. Private and public sectors have recognized the importance of and need for timely and accurate data from which to assess the continued progress of the nation's mass transportation agencies.

In January 1983, the FTA Reporting System Advisory Committee was established to make recommendations on improving the quality and usefulness of the data collected under the program. Many of the past improvements to the Annual Report are the results of the Advisory Committee's recommendations. The Advisory Committee's charter expired on September 30, 1986. FTA continues to work closely with individuals and organizations in the transit industry to improve the reporting system and the Annual Report publications.

To help promote this cooperative effort, FTA urges all interested parties, including transit operators, State and local governments, planning organizations, trade unions, research organizations, and others to review and critique this edition of the *Data Tables for the 1997 National Transit Database Report Year*. Comments and suggestions should be forwarded to the address provided in Section 1.5.

1.7 Availability of Machine-Readable Data

The data contained in the individual transit agency statistics tables (i.e., Chapter 3 for report years 1983 through 1989 and Chapter 2 for report years 1990 through 1997) in the Annual Report are available on diskettes. These diskettes (double sided) are organized

by report table and are compatible for use on PCs using Lotus 1-2-3 software. They contain the actual data reported by transit agencies in cases of questionable data, not the "Q" found in the 1984 through 1987 Annual Reports. In the 1988 and 1989 diskettes, the value of the data is included followed by a "Q" for questionable data. In addition, diskette sets organized by fleet size are available for report year 1981 only. These sets are available in either an Apple II DIF format or a single-sided IBM-PC DIF format. For further information on diskette availability and costs, please contact:

McTrans Center
512 Weil Hall
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-9988
(904) 392-0378

or

PC-Trans
University of Kansas
Transportation Center
2011 Learned Hall
Lawrence, KS 66045
(913) 864-5655

Editions of the Data Tables for Report Years 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997 can be downloaded from FTA's Web site at www.fta.dot.gov. The files are in Lotus format.

Complete data (including required-level data not published in this report), all voluntary-level data, and data for prior report years are also available on magnetic tapes. For further information, please contact the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center:

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U.S. Department of Transportation
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(617) 494-2259
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